

# Expert says Soviets won't let Lithuania secede

By DAN WHIPPLE  
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CASPER — Lithuania almost certainly will not be allowed to secede from the Soviet Union and "just how much blood is going to be shed is the only issue that's on the table now," according to Professor Jerry Hough, an expert on the U.S.S.R.

Hough and a number of other experts spoke at the Casper College Social Science Seminar on "The Soviet Union: Retrospect and Prospect."

Hough, a professor at Duke University and a senior fellow at the Brookings Institute, was pessimistic about the chances for an independent Lithuania any time soon. "It seems to me you've got to be very careful with language about decolonization," Hough said.

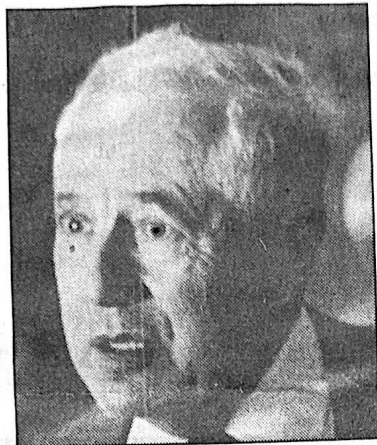
Referring to the lessons of recent history, he said, "When one ethnic group controls another ethnic group outside its borders, they always let them go — that's been an iron rule."

"But it's also been a fairly iron rule that if one ethnic group controls another ethnic group inside the borders, they never let them go."

"In general, unless the central power disintegrates... secession just doesn't occur. Certainly my expectation is that in the year 2000, the Soviet Union will have the same number of republics that it has now... It won't have lost anything."

"It is absolutely clear what is going to happen now," he said. "The only thing that is not clear that's going to happen now is whether it's going to take place without loss of life."

Another speaker, however, Marshall Shulman, was not so pessimistic about Lithuania's chances for independence. Shulman, an emeritus professor at Columbia University, said, "In the long run, I just don't see how the



**MARSHALL SHULMAN**  
*Lithuania — 'an unstoppable force'*

Lithuanian feelings about independence are going to be put off... It seems to me that this is an unstoppable force."

Gorbachev is trying to "buy time" on the Lithuanian issue to work out a solution, conceivably some sort of confederation, "A resting place short of dissolution of union," Shulman said.

Gorbachev has refused to set a date for a June summit meeting, Shulman said, a fact that has the U.S. leaders worried, Hough said. Gorbachev wants an economic treaty with the U.S., possibly one granting his country "most favored nation" trading status.

However, the administration is now saying that if there is violent repression in Lithuania, the U.S. may not grant that status, Hough said.

"The moderation we have in China is going to make it easier to deal with the Soviets... But it's an extremely bad time for us to cut off relations with the Soviet Union, because Gorbachev has all the cards on German reunification."

Another speaker, Robert Sharlet, professor of political science at Union College, said he was "not wildly optimistic" about the suc-

cess of reforms in the Soviet Union, but that the problems were internal and would have to be solved internally, without much help from the United States.

Sharlet said that whenever the central government is weak, the "borderlands of empire were restive." The Soviet central government is not weak, but it is in "momentary disarray."

"Moscow's attention is distracted and the borders are more than restive, many of them are in a breakaway status," he said.

Sharlet said that some Russian officials he has talked to seem to believe that there will be newly-independent republics from the Soviet Union within a few years — Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, Moldavia and Georgia. These states may eventually re-confederate with the U.S.S.R., but only after a period of time.

"Anti-Russian feeling is running high," he said.

"Are they moving toward a law-governed state?" Sharlet asked. "Citizen-state relations are changing, but they are changing de facto, rather than de jure," he said. New laws are being enacted, but slowly, and the state is "placing these laws in a very infertile legal culture."

Shulman said that the Soviet Union is attempting a transformation on a scale that is unprecedented, moving from a totalitarian system to one of shared power and from a centrally-planned economy to some kind of market economy. There is no precedent and a major question is "Can it be done by democratic measures?" he said.

Many of Gorbachev's reforms are the culmination of 30 years of reform efforts since the death of Stalin.